unpatentable over Didcott. The Examiner stated that Didcott discloses "a thin-walled tubular dilator which can be used in blood vessels having a wire mesh which is slotted much as Applicant's device and which is covered with a resilient material....Didcott's dilator has a first diameter which permits it to enter the blood vessel and a second diameter which causes it to force out upon the interior walls of the vessel."

Claims 1-11, 13-15, 17-21, 23-27, 29-30, and 32-38 were rejected under the provisions of 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Hammerslag as applied to claim 1, and further in view of Didcott. The Examiner stated that it would "be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to provide Hammerslag's thin-walled graft with a wire mesh sleeve as taught by Didcott."

Claims 12, 22, and 28 were rejected under the provisions of 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Hammerslag in view of Didcott as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of Walsten. The Examiner stated that Walsten teaches the use of openings through a coated wire tubular prosthesis, and that it would be obvious to leave openings through the wall of Hammerslag and/or Didcott's device.

Claims 4-6, 9-12, 16, and 31, were rejected under the provisions of 35 U.S.C. § 112 "as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicant regards as the invention." The Examiner stated that claims 4-6 and 9-12 were vague and indefinite in that "they contained no further method step or limitation of a previously defined method step." Claims 16

and 31 were stated to be vague and indefinite in that "they seem to describe the graft as exerting no force on the vessel wall which it must remained attached to. This is contrary to Examiner's understanding of the purpose of the prosthesis, e.g., to hold itself in place in the vessel by exerting a force against the vessel wall."

THE REFERENCES

Hammerslag, U.S. Patent No. 4,560,374, discloses a synthetic, tapered liner, which is intended to be "installed" in an artery section. In the case of coronary by-pass surgery, when a section of vein is used to replace the affected artery, the sleeve in accordance with the invention is installed in the vein section during the surgery. Hammerslag also allegedly discloses delivery of his sleeve by use of a balloon catheter, wherein the balloon catheter is inflated to press the liner firmly against the inner wall of an artery. Deflation of the catheter allegedly allows the removal of the catheter from the blood vessel supposedly leaving the liner in place within the artery or blood vessel. Throughout the specification, Hammerslag emphasizes that the liner is made "from an insert (inert?) plastic having substantially the elasticity as the human artery" (Col. 1, 11, 35-37). Hammerslag further states that "[s]ince the artery is elastic and expands and contracts the invention contemplates the use of material having the same or substantially the same elasticity as the artery." (Col. 2, 11. 7-10).

Didcott, Great Britain Patent No. 1,205,743, discloses an oesophageal dilator which includes an expandable tubular member made of a tubular metal core of lattice form. The